UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CONF.157/PC/42/Add.11
28 April 1993

Original: ENGLISH

WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Preparatory Committee
Fourth session
Geneva, 19-30 April 1993
Agenda item 6

REPORT ON OTHER MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Contribution from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

The attention of the Preparatory Committee is drawn to the attached contribution from UNESCO which was transmitted by letter dated 17 April 1993 addressed to the Assistant Secretary-General, in which the Director-General of UNESCO stated that:

> "The International Congress adopted, as you know, a 'World Plan of Action on Education for Human Rights and Democracy'. It also examined the question of academic freedom and took note of the 'Contributions to the preparation of a declaration on academic freedom'.
>
> I have sent these two documents to the Secretary-General of the United Nations with a view to having them brought to the attention of the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, Austria, June 1993). I should be grateful if an item on 'Education for Human Rights and Democracy' could be placed on the Agenda of the fourth Preparatory Committee of the World Conference on Human Rights. The two documents attached would serve as working documents for the discussions on this item."

E.93-13817

WORLD PLAN OF ACTION ON

EDUCATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

Adopted by the International Congress on
Education for Human Rights and Democracy
(Montreal, Canada, 8-11 March 1993)

INTRODUCTION

WHO?

The World Plan of Action is addressed, among others, to:

individuals, families, groups and communities, educators, teaching institutions and their boards, students, young people, the media, employers and unions, popular movements, political parties, parliamentarians, public officials, national and international non-governmental organizations, all multilateral and intergovernmental organizations, the United Nations Organization, in particular its Centre for Human Rights, specialized institutions of the United Nations system, in particular UNESCO, and States.

The advocates of this Plan come from all sectors of society. It is addressed to victims of human rights violations and defenders of human rights and democracy as well as decision-makers.

The Plan is not a comprehensive strategy for formal and informal education. It is more a framework of action which will be tailored and executed by various participants. These participants are better qualified to adjust the implementation of the Plan in accordance with their priorities, resources and particular circumstances. The Plan will therefore depend on all actors including grassroots education workers in villages, refugee camps, barrios, inner cities and war zones throughout the world.

The Plan conceives of education in its broadest sense, among all age, gender, class, ethnic, national, religious and

linguistic groups and in all sectors of society. It takes a global view of education, through strategies for learning in formal and non-formal settings and including popular and adult education, education in the family, out-of-school education of youth, education of specialized groups and education in difficult situations.

WHAT?

The Plan of Action calls for a global mobilization of energies and resources, from the family to the United Nations, to educate individuals and groups about human rights so that conduct leading to a denial of rights will be changed, all rights will be respected and civil society will be transformed into a peaceful and participatory model. Learning is not an end in itself but rather the means of eliminating violations of human rights and building a culture of peace based on democracy, development, tolerance and mutual respect.

The Plan is based on the body of international human rights and humanitarian law. Human rights are seen in this Plan as universal and indivisible.

As a forward-looking strategy this Plan builds on, **inter alia**, the 1974 "Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms" and the recommendations which emerged from the UNESCO International Congress on the Teaching of Human Rights, in Vienna in 1978, the UNESCO International Congress on Human Rights Teaching, Information and Documentation in Malta in 1987 and the International Forum on Education for Democracy, in Tunis in December 1992.

The Plan conceives of human rights in their broadest sense to include **inter alia** learning about tolerance and acceptance of others, solidarity, participatory citizenship and the importance of building mutual respect and understanding.

WHY?

The context of the Plan of Action must be seen as one of alarm and urgency. Certainly, the Cold War has come to a close, walls have come down and some dictators have been deposed. Yet the last decade of the Twentieth century is experiencing the recurrence of the most serious human rights violations, caused by the rise of nationalism, racism, xenophobia, sexism and religious intolerance. These recurrences have led to the most abhorrent forms of ethnic cleansing including the systematic rape of women, exploitation, neglect and abuse of children and concerted violence against foreigners, refugees, displaced persons, minorities, indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups.

Notwithstanding the dissolution of authoritarian regimes and the formation of emerging democracies worldwide over the last years, new forms of autocracy have also emerged. An alarming rise of racism, various forms of extremism and religious fanaticism and the dangerous instability of some post-authoritarian states are noted. No less disturbing for the protection of human rights are the threats stemming from environmental degradation, from new biomedical technologies and from the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

Education for human rights in a changing world is the thrust of this Plan of Action. It should be participatory and operational, creative, innovative and empowering at all levels of civil society. The rise of nationalism and intolerance mentioned above calls for special and anticipatory educational strategies aimed at preventing the outbreak of violent conflicts and the related human rights violations. Incremental changes can no longer be considered satisfactory. Education should aim to nurture democratic values, sustain impulses for democratization and promote societal transformation based upon human rights and democracy.

The Plan of Action takes into consideration the development of human rights norms and the establishment of mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights at national, regional and international levels.

A key challenge for the future is to enhance the universality of human rights by rooting these rights in different cultural traditions. The effective exercise of human rights is also contingent upon the degree of responsibility by individuals towards the community.

WHEN?

The World Plan of Action is intended to start immediately, working toward specific measurable objectives within a time-table laid down by the participants in the Plan. The observation of the Fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Organization in 1995 and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998 can serve as the focus for activities, programmes and projects in human rights education and occasions for their assessment and dissemination. A series of events for sharing experiences and assessing results should be organized from the local community level up to and including the global level. Such sharing and assessment should be subject to a general overall review by the end of the decade for planning on-going activities and programmes in the Twenty-first century.

HOW?

In order for this Plan to succeed, the active participation of individual states is essential, wherever possible. The state should commit itself to defined targets for human rights education and awareness within governmental structures and institutions. The state should provide funding for initiatives which are generated nationally. The commitment of states to human rights education indicates the political will to build a sustainable democratic society. The quality of human rights education is in itself a manifestation of such a will now and for the future. The initiatives of states in this field provide a basis for assessment. In this context, it is important for states to accede to all human rights instruments.

The United Nations system, in particular UNESCO and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights, and a number of governmental and international governmental and non-governmental organizations have already begun to work in the area of education for human rights and democracy. This work should be considered an important part for the implementation of the Plan, both as a point of departure and also a source of ideas, materials, experience and insight and it should be intensified. In particular, more emphasis should be given to projects for education for human rights and democracy under the United Nations Programme of Advisory Services and Technical Assistance in the Field of Human Rights. In this context the Plan could provide a frame for improved co-ordination of programmes of human rights education and democracy.

The following seven major strategies are proposed:

1. Development and distribution by UNESCO of a **standard form for planning, implementation and assessment** of the Plan. This will assist governmental and non-governmental organizations in the projection, coordination and review of various programmes, projects and activities to achieve the objectives of the World Plan of Action. UNESCO would keep a register of all initiatives undertaken in this framework communicated by the participants;

2. Development of active **national, regional and international networks** to produce material, curricula and programmes as well as to exchange methods and materials and develop "best practice" approaches;

3. Access to **up-to-date information and documentation** and the availability of practical and inexpensive teaching materials;

4. Convening of regional and global **momentum-building conferences**;

5. Strengthening of the **United Nations Voluntary Fund for Advisory Services and Technical Assistance in the Field of Human Rights** and of the **UNESCO Voluntary Fund for the Development of the Knowledge of Human Rights through Education and Information** so that they can better support human rights education, information and documentation projects on a worldwide basis, including those of non-governmental organizations, as well as encouraging funding of such projects by other **public and private funding institutions and sources**;

6. Emphasis to be given to the **right to education and in particular human rights education** by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and its monitoring mechanisms, the regional human rights commissions, as well as by the expert organs supervising the international human rights treaties and in particular the Committee on the Rights of the Child;

7. **A follow-up committee** to be established by UNESCO, in consultation with the United Nations Centre for Human Rights, will disseminate the Plan, receive relevant communications and follow-up and monitor the implementation of the Plan.

The Plan emphasizes that learning is intended to encompass the concepts that knowledge must lead to action, that access to knowledge should be empowering, that learning is a participatory process and that the learner is also the teacher and vice versa. The methodology of education for human rights and democracy should be respectful of the rights of the learner and democratic in its organization and functioning.

This Plan calls for methods which will reach the widest number of individuals most effectively, such as the use of the mass media, the training of trainers, the mobilization of popular movements and the possibility of establishing a worldwide television and radio network under the auspices of the United Nations.

OBJECTIVES

The Plan strives to:

1. make information available about human rights norms and instruments as well as recourse procedures and mechanisms against violations at the national, regional and international levels. Special efforts should be made to ensure that this information reaches young people;

2. assist learners to understand the connections between economic conditions and access to rights and encourage

educators to support strategies for change that are non-violent and democratic;

3. increase the awareness of educators in all sectors and at all levels of the benefits of co-operation and co-ordination through networking and to assist them in building human rights education networks;

4. encourage governments and the international community to provide and foster a culture of peace based on human rights;

5. to make human rights and the national, regional and international instruments that guarantee such rights more widely known.

MAIN LINES OF ACTION

The ultimate purpose of the Plan is to create a culture of human rights and to develop democratic societies that enable individuals and groups to solve their disagreements and conflicts by the use of non-violent methods.

The challenge of making education for human rights and democracy effective and comprehensive worldwide will require:

1. The identification of the most appropriate target groups so as to ensure rapid and effective implementation;

2. A focus on educational support where it is most needed and most empowering and ensuring that projects are suitable for potential users;

3. The encouragement and development of initiatives which mobilize people and which utilize innovative methodology;

4. The process of human rights education and training with the participation of target groups, must be viewed as an exercise in democracy. This can be done by practising the principle of equality and by developing participatory and inclusive learning contexts and curricula in response to the real needs of people. Educational processes and methodologies must be models for what the plan wishes to achieve in society as a whole. It is also imperative that learning programmes include approaches which assist people to understand and analyse their relations with power as well as with leadership styles and abuses;

5. The development of pedagogic research into the various aspects of education for human rights and democracy, taking account especially of present changes;

6. The systematic revision of school textbooks with a view to eliminating xenophobic, racist, sexist and other stereotypes;

7. The building of practical relationships or networks among individuals, educators, groups and institutions in particular through meetings and bilateral and multilateral collaboration;

8. The strengthening of the commitment to identify and increase resources for education for human rights and democracy at national, regional and international levels. It is essential that the action of NGOs is not impeded;

9. Special attention should be given to the design of cost-effective and sustainable educational programmes;

10. A global commitment to increase resources for education for human rights and democracy as well as earmarking funds in development projects for this purpose.

LEVELS OF ACTION

The following levels of action should be emphasized:

Teaching Human Rights and Democracy in the Curricula at All Levels of the School System

Aim: To build an integral and broad-based curriculum that is both pervasive across subject disciplines and taught as a separate subject so that human rights and democracy education is dealt with repeatedly throughout a person's basic education. The theme of rights, responsibilities and democratic processes should also be woven into all or most topics of study and included in the values aimed at in school life and in the process of socialization.

The focus should be on:

i) pre-primary
ii) primary
iii) secondary and vocational training
iv) post-secondary - colleges and universities
v) teacher training/education
vi) teachers' organizations and unions
vii) school boards and other levels of education administration
viii) parents' organizations.

Education for Human Rights and Democracy in a Non-formal Setting

Aims: To involve groups of adults and young people, including those not attending school, in out-of-school education, through their families, their professional associations, workplaces,

institutions, groupings, etc.. Programmes will aim at increasing the awareness of individuals in both formal and informal groups to their rights and to their responsibilities and to their full participation throughout society. Special attention will be given to reach all women whatever their current level of participation in public life.

To achieve this aim, education for human rights and democracy will take place in specific settings and focus on certain groups including:

i) workplace (unions, employers)
ii) professional associations
iii) religious and cultural organizations
iv) youth, including through leisure and sports clubs
v) UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations
vi) groups which are less exposed to public life (for example, people living in rural or remote areas)
vii) groups working specifically on literacy, advocacy and assisting those living in extreme poverty
viii) security, army, police and prison personnel, etc.
ix) public officials and decision-makers
x) judges and lawyers and others working in the administration of justice
xi) media personnel
xii) medical doctors, health professionals and scientists including those engaged in biological research.

Education for Human Rights and Democracy in Specific Contexts and Difficult Situations

Aim: To direct efforts to provide appropriate information and education to people in difficult situations where their rights are endangered.

In addition to the proposed Objectives (1) and (2) above, attention should be paid to vulnerable groups as well as to potential and actual violators with a view to preventing abuse and to protecting the victims. The level of intervention for this education and protection will depend on:

A. The type of situation, such as

1. Armed conflicts of either an international or non-international character
2. Internal tension, unrest, uprisings and state of emergency
3. Periods of transition from dictatorship to democracy or of threats to democracy
4. Foreign occupation
5. Natural disasters.

B. The needs of specific groups, such as

1. Women
2. Children
3. Indigenous peoples
4. Refugees and internally displaced persons
5. Political prisoners
6. Minorities
7. Migrant workers
8. Disabled persons
9. Persons with HIV/AIDS.

It is to be noted that the early adoption of the United Nations Draft declaration relating to the rights and responsibilities of individuals and organs of society to promote and protect human rights would be a major contribution to the implementation of this aspect of the Plan.

RESEARCH, INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION

Given the essential role of research, information and documentation for the implementation of the Plan of Action and the United Nations Public Information Campaign for Human Rights, a major effort should be directed towards diversifying information resources, documentation and teaching and learning materials directed to meet the practical needs of teaching and training at different levels and for different audiences. It is equally important to strengthen existing national, regional and international information networks, to help build new ones where necessary and also to encourage the creation of local information and documentation centres so that suitable materials are collected and skills developed in gathering information and documentation through:

i) inexpensive and easy access to up-to-date information,
ii) simple computerization and search systems,
iii) identification, creation and strengthening of national, regional and international research centres and clearing houses on human rights information,
iv) encouragement to share information - south/south, east/west and north/south - serving both educators and documentalists of human rights and co-ordinated by a non-governmental organization active in the field of information;
v) protection and security of information gathered by fact-finding missions, human rights education projects, etc.;
vi) development of human rights media other than printed material that would include audio-visuals, transparencies, music, games, toys and other forms appropriate for reaching non-literate people and children. Means would have to be found to ensure the availability of such material in local languages;

vii) support for research based on a global view of human rights, taking into account the close interdependence between human rights, development, democracy and environment.

The role of UNESCO is of particular importance in enhancing the quality of publications in the area of human rights education and for the best use and distribution of information, documentation and materials. Such activities would require **inter alia** the strengthening of the infrastructure of UNESCO and close co-operation with other documentation and information centres, including those of the United Nations system.

OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME

It is to be noted, in particular, that the success of the Plan depends on the understanding that planning at all levels must be appropriate when confronting problems such as:

i) the absence of political will of certain partners,
ii) the dangers of marginalization of the process internationally as well as intranationally,
iii) the absence of target group involvement in the development and use of material, processes and policies,
iv) the potential use of unsuitable methodologies,
v) the lack of training of many participants,
vi) the insufficiency of co-ordination and co-operation between the national, regional and international levels,
vii) the occasional tendency to confine human rights education to the legal profession,
viii) the lack of a multidisciplinary approach,
ix) the resistance to change provoked by new relationships based on human rights.

CONCLUSION

The challenge the World Plan of Action for Education on Human Rights and Democracy will have to meet is that of translating human rights, democracy and concepts of peace, of sustainable development and of international solidarity into social norms and behaviour. This is a challenge for humanity: to build a peaceful, democratic, prosperous and just world. Constant active education and learning is needed to meet such a challenge.

It is hoped that this Plan of Action will be implemented by committed nations, individuals, groups, every organ of society, and the international community at large, to ensure its full success for the benefit of present and future generations.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PREPARATION OF A DECLARATION ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Noted by the International Congress on
Education for Human Rights and Democracy
(Montreal, Canada, 8-11 March 1993)

Considering the international standards in the field of human rights established by the United Nations, in particular in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966);

Considering also the UNESCO instruments in the field of human rights and education, in particular the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966), the Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Co-operation (1966) and the Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Research (1974); *the Recommendation on Education concerning International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1974);*

Stressing that certain rights recognized therein are of particular importance to academic freedom, such as the freedoms of thought, conscience, religion, expression, assembly, association and movement;

Recognizing that academic freedom is an essential precondition for those educational, research, administrative and service functions with which universities and other institutions of higher education are entrusted;

Bearing in mind that, by pursuing truth, developing scientific knowledge and teaching, members of the academic community carry a special responsibility towards society in conformity with human rights;

Emphasizing *that autonomy of institutions of higher education is essential for the full enjoyment of academic freedom;*

Convinced that every state is obliged to guarantee academic freedom without discrimination on any ground, such as race, colour, *gender*, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, birth or other status;

Paying tribute to the contributions made by the Lima Declaration on Academic Freedom and Autonomy of Institutions of Higher Education (1988), the Magna Charta of European Universities (Bologna 1988), the Dar-es-
Salaam Declaration on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility of Academics (1990) and the Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility (1990) and *Poznañ Declaration on Academic Freedom (1993);*

Recognizing that the academic community consists of all persons working or studying at an institution of higher education;

Participants agreed upon that members of the academic community shall enjoy, individually or collectively, the following rights:

Article 1

1. Every person has the right, on the basis of ability and competence and without discrimination of any kind, to become a member of the academic community, to be promoted, and to be protected against arbitrary *measures, including* dismissal, from any institution of higher education.

2. Temporary measures aimed at accelerating **de facto** equality for those disadvantages in the access to or in the life of the academic community shall not be considered as discriminatory.

Article 2

1. Members of the academic community *while carrying out* research functions have the right to freely determine the subject and methods of their research in accordance with the acknowledged principles of scientific inquiry.

2. They have the right to communicate the findings of their research freely and to publish them without censorship.

Article 3

1. Members of the academic community *while carrying out* teaching functions have the right to freely determine, within the framework established by the institution of higher education, the content and methods of instruction.

2. They shall not be forced to instruct against their own best knowledge and conscience *or to use curricula and methods of instructions contrary to human rights*.

Article 4

1. Students of institutions of higher education have the right to study, to choose field of study from available courses and to receive official recognition of the knowledge and experience acquired.

2. They have the right to participate in the organization of educational process.

3. States shall provide adequate resources for students in need to enable them to pursue their studies.

Article 5

1. All members of the academic community have the freedom, regardless of frontiers, to seek, receive, obtain and impart information and ideas of all kinds and in all forms, including by electronic means.

2. *However,* in case of restrictions special facilities *and protections* shall be granted to *all* members of the academic community carrying out research in order to enable them to accomplish their tasks.

3. States and intergovernmental organizations shall actively support the mutual exchange of information and documentation for the advancement of research and education.

Article 6

1. All members of the academic community have the right to co-operate freely with their counterparts in any part of the world. To this end they shall enjoy freedom of movement within the country and to travel outside and re-enter their country.

2. These freedoms *shall not be restricted unless it is absolutely necessary in a democratic society* on grounds of national security and in accordance with the international human rights law.

3. States and intergovernmental organizations shall actively support co-operation between members of the academic community.

Article 7

1. The exercise of the rights provided above implies special responsibilities towards society. *Nothing in the present Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any member of the academic community to engage in any activities or perform any act aimed at the destruction of human rights of others.*

2. Research, teaching, collection and exchange of information shall be conducted in accordance with ethical and professional standards *consistent with international human rights norms.*

Article 8

1. The *full* enjoyment of academic freedom and the compliance with the respective responsibilities demand autonomy of institutions of higher education.

2. Such autonomy shall be exercised with the participation of all members of the academic community, *including students.*

Article 9

All members of the academic community have the right to an effective remedy by a competent organ both within and outside institutions of higher education for acts violating their academic freedom.